Hence it muſt be evident, that roads, however good, can never effectually aſſiſt the remote country, each mile is attended with a heavy expence on carriage, till penetrating ſo far, that the value of the produce is conſumed in carriage; it terminates in a luxuriant wilderneſs, ſable and uncultivated as the interior of Africa. But by canals, the conveyance may be ſo eaſy, that they may penetrate the moſt remote diſtricts, draw down the produce to the ports of trade, and bear up the various conveniencies of life; thus each man may exchange his ſurplus labour for the neceſſaries or luxuries which he may require; hence his faculties will be put into action, cultivation will flouriſh, and enjoyment be more equally diffuſed; canals will paſs through every vale, meander round each hill, and bind the whole country in the bonds of ſocial intercourſe; hence population will be increaſed, each acre of land will become valuable, induſtry will be ſtimulated, and the nation, gaining ſtrength, will riſe to unparalleled importance, by virtue of ſo powerful an ally as canals.

Having exhibited the immenſe diſparity between canals and roads, with the mode of extending canals in every direction, by appropriating the tolls; it is evident, that ſuch a ſyſtem will produce infinite navigation. But the mode of conſtructing them muſt be maturely conſidered; and in this, two things muſt be ſcrupulouſly adhered to.

Firſt, that canals may truly benefit a country, it is neceſſary the paſſage ſhould be performed with equal eaſe each way. Second, that the neareſt courſe ſhould be taken to the principal points of the country; and for both theſe reaſons, the beds of the rivers, beyond tide, muſt almoſt univerſally be for-

forſaken *; becauſe torrents, in time of rain, which is extremely injurious to the works of art, with the ſhoals in dry ſeaſons, together with the current ever ſtanding one way, will very frequently interrupt free intercourſe, and render freſh-water river navigations precarious.

The rivers, creeks, and rivulets, which are numerous in all parts, muſt be conſidered as the feeders of canals; and, in this reſpect, having an abundance of water, America is very fortunate; land is alſo cheap and timber plenty, ſo that the great expence of an American canal would be labour.

Therefore, as it is the channels of art, which can only effectually aſſiſt the country, I have conſtantly endeavoured to find a ſyſtem which might paſs by the ſtreighteſt line to a given point; hence you will obſerve the mode of mountinghills, croſſing valleys, rivers, and defiles, by the various machines; which, I hope, will diſplay an eaſy means of extending water communications through a great continent, and bear the mind to thoſe days, when a well-directed œconomy in manual labour will give enlightened and rational enjoyment to many millions of inhabitants: hoping, that this important ſubject will make a part of the deliberation of a wiſe Legiſlature,

I remain, with all poſſible Reſpect,

Yours ſincerely,

London, March, 1796. *ROBERT FULTON.*

* By forſaking the beds of the rivers I mean, that they ſhould not compoſe or make a Principle part of a leading canal; yet, however numerous canals may be, it will frequently happen that ſome miles of a river will afford eaſy navigation in particular ſeaſons, and probably touch the leading canals into which the goods, or perhaps boats, may be transferred from the river; for ſmall boats will live on the American rivers in particular parts and ſeaſons, of which there are innumerable inſtances by the batteaus and even canoes.